

## SDCF grant serves up dinner with a side dish of human connection



*Immediate release – Friday February 5, 2021*

When you think about it, the folks at Growing Years Family Resource Centre have an incredibly important job.

The title says it all, but it's one of those things that sometimes is so recognizable, so engrained in our day-to-day familiarities, that you don't do the deep dive and really think about what goes on inside.

And of course, in 2020, all the good stuff that happened within their Manitoba Avenue building stopped when COVID came knocking.

A SDCF grant helped Growing Years deliver food to families. It's been a learning experience – food is essential, so too is human contact, even from an acceptable social distance

And they do the good stuff. Connecting with families, children, playing a key role in those formative years and sometimes, just being there to listen to a new mom who is finding the day a little too long and a little too overwhelming.

And so, they did what all superheroes do in times of turmoil – they put on their capes and went out and helped, wherever they could.

Among their numerous initiatives to stay in touch with families when a worldwide pandemic was telling us all to stay at home and stay away from others, was a Growing Years food delivery service.

And Shawna Cromie, Director of Growing Years, said they learned very quickly that food may have been the main course, but the human element was the perfect side dish and maybe even more fulfilling.

“We noticed early on this wasn't just about the food...People were as happy with being able to connect with us as they were with getting the food,” Cromie says.

A \$7,000 grant from the Selkirk and District Community Foundation allowed for Growing Years to deliver essential food and hygiene items to clients, and Cromie was thankful beyond words for the support.

“Knowing that it’s community members who donate to the Community Foundation, who in turn provide that gift back to the community members that need it the most is just such a beautiful full circle moment,” Cromie says.

“We had to shift how we support the families and that required some extra thinking and extra money, that’s why we’re so thankful to the Foundation, to allow us to really meet the needs of the people.”

The deliveries, which started way back when the weather was nicer, were a truly joyful experience.

“The deliveries were nothing extravagant, just those basics to get people by,” Cromie says.

“But that connection piece is 100 per cent elevated by being able to go and connect with these families in a safe, outdoor, socially distanced one on one, where you get to see their faces on the doorstep with their kids.

“The biggest part that we found they appreciated, and we found so gratifying, was that they were as happy with being able to connect with us as they were with getting the food.”

It was a win-win, and so important during the pandemic.

“If you ever talked about feeling like what you’re doing is making a difference, these girls here, holy cow, (it was) so rewarding to see that play out that way.”

Bev Clegg, Executive Director of the SDCF, said the grant to Growing Years shows how important every donation to the Foundation is, and how every dollar does so much.

“In the grand scheme of things, \$7,000 isn’t that much money, but it’s been worth its weight in gold to Growing Years and the families that make use of their services,” Clegg says.

“These are the stories, the real-life stories, that put a smile on your face and make you proud of your community, the community that supports the Foundation so it can turn around and throw that support right back.”

Growing Years received its grant through the SDCF’s Community Grant Program. Applications for the next Community Grant Program are due by March 1.

Applicants must be a registered charity with Canada Revenue Agency and be located and providing services in the City of Selkirk or the RM’s of St. Andrews or St. Clements.

Grant guidelines and applications are available by visiting [www.sdcf.ca](http://www.sdcf.ca) or you can call 204-785-9755 or email [selkirkfoundation@shaw.ca](mailto:selkirkfoundation@shaw.ca)

The Selkirk and District Community Foundation is a charitable organization that provides financial support to charitable causes and agencies in the region, which includes Selkirk, St. Andrews and St. Clements. Gifts from donors enable the Foundation to support countless groups and individuals in our community. The Foundation has given in excess of \$2.7 million to more than 125 local charities and community organizations during its 25 years. For more details contact SDCF Executive Director Bev Clegg at 204.785.9755.